

Predictions for the Year 1708.

Wherein the Month and Day of the Month are set down, the Persons named, and the great Actions and Events of next Year particularly related, as they will come to pass.

Written to prevent the People of England from being further Impoſ'd on by vulgar Almanack-makers.

By Isaac Bickerstaff, Eſq;

I Have conſider'd the groſs Abufe of Aſtrology in this Kingdom, and upon debating the Matter with my ſelf, I could not poſſibly lay the Fault upon the Art, but upon thoſe groſs Impoſtors who ſet up to be the Artiſts. I know ſeveral learned Men have contended that the whole is a Cheat; that it is abſurd and ridiculous to imagine, the Stars can have any Influence at all upon humane Actions, Thoughts or Inclinations: And whoever has not bent his Studies that Way, may be excuſed for thinking ſo, when he ſees in how wretched a manner that noble Art is treated by a few mean illiterate Traders between us and the Stars; who import a yearly Stock of *Nonsense, Lyes, Folly, and Impertinence*, which they offer to the World as genuine from the Planets, tho' they deſcend from no greater a Height than their own Brains.

I intend in a ſhort Time to publiſh a large and rational Defence of this Art, and therefore ſhall ſay no more in its Juſtification at preſent, than that it hath been in all Ages defended by many learned Men, and among the reſt by *Socrates* himſelf, whom I look upon as undoubtedly the wiſeſt of uninspired Mortals: To which if we add, that thoſe who have condemn'd this Art, tho' otherwiſe Learn'd, having been ſuch as either did not apply their Studies this way, or at leaſt did not ſucceed in their *Applications*: Their Teſtimony will not be of much weight to its Diſadvantage, ſince they are liable to the

common Objection of Condemning what they did not understand.

Nor am I at all offended, or think it an Injury to the Art, when I see the common *Dealers* in it, the *Students in Astrology*, the *Philomaths*, and the rest of that Tribe, treated by wise Men with the utmost Scorn and Contempt; but rather wonder, when I observe *Gentlemen in the Country*, rich enough to serve the Nation in Parliament, poring in *Partridge's Almanock*, to find out the Events of the Year at Home and Abroad; nor dare to propose a Hunting Match, till *Gadbury* or he have fix'd the Weather.

I will allow either of the Two I have mention'd, or any others of the Fraternity, to be not only Astrologers, but Conjurors too, if I do not produce a hundred Instances in all their Almanacks, to convince any reasonable Man, that they do not so much as understand common Grammar and Syntax; that they are not able to spell any Word out of the usual road, nor even in their Prefaces correct common Sense or intelligible *Englisk*. Then for their Observations and Predictions, they are such as will equally suit any Age or Country in the World. *This Month a certain great Person will be threatned with Death or Sickness.* This the News Paper will tell them, for there we find at the End of the Year, that no Month passes without the Death of some Person of Note; and it would be hard if it should be otherwise, when there are at least Two thousand Persons of Note in this Kingdom, many of them old, and the Almanack-maker has the liberty of chusing the sickliest Season of the Year where he may fix his Prediction; Again, *This Month an Eminent Clergyman will be preferr'd*; of which there may be some Hundreds, half of them with one Foot in the Grave. Then, *Such a Planet in such a House shews great Machinations, Plots and Conspiracies, that may in time be brought to Light*: After which, if we hear of any Discovery, the Astrologer gets the Honour, if not, his Prediction still stand good. And at last, *God preserve K. William from all his open and secret Enemies, Amen.* When, if the King should happen to have died, the Astrologer plainly foretold it; otherwise it passes but for the pious Ejaculation of a Loyal Subject: Tho' it unluckily happen'd in some of their Almanacks, that poor K. William was pray'd for many Months after he was dead, because it fell out that he died about the beginning of the Year.

To mention no more of their impertinent Predictions; What have

have we to do with their Advertisements about *Pills and Drinks* for the *Veneral Disease*, or their mutual Quarrels in Verse and Prose of *Whig and Tory*, wherewith the Stars have little to do.

Having long observ'd and lamented these, and a hundred other Abuses of this Art, too tedious to repeat, I resolv'd to proceed in a new Way, which I doubt not will be to the general Satisfaction of the Kingdom: I can this Year produce but a Specimen of what I design for the future: Having employ'd most part of my Time in adjusting and correcting the Calculations I made for some Years past, because I would offer nothing to the World of which I am not as fully satisfied, as that I am now alive. For these last two Years I have not fail'd in above one or two Particulars, and those of no very great Moment. I exactly foretold the Miscarriage at *Toulon*, with all its Particulars; and the loss of Admiral *Showell*, tho' I was mistaken as to the Day, placing that Accident about 36 Hours sooner than it happen'd; but upon reviewing my Schemes, I quickly found the Cause of that Error. I likewise foretold the Battle at *Almanza* to the very Day and Hour, with the Loss on both Sides, and the Consequences thereof. All which I shew'd to some Friends many Months before they happen'd. That is, I gave them Papers sealed up, to open in such a Time, after which they were at liberty to read them; and there they found my Predictions true in every Article, except one or two every minute.

As for the few following Predictions I now offer to the World, I forbore to publish them till I had perused the several Almanacks for the Year we are now entred on. I find them all in the usual Strain, and I beg the Reader will compare their Manner with mine: And here I make bold to tell the World, that I lay the whole Credit of my Art upon the Truth of these Predictions; And I will be content, that *Partridge*, and the rest of his Clan, may hoot me for a Cheat and Impostor if I fail in any single particular of Moment. I believe, any Man who reads this Paper will look upon me to be at least a Person of as much Honesty and Understanding, as a common Maker of Almanacks. I do not lurk in the Dark; I am not wholly unknown in the World; I have set my Name at length, to be a Mark of Infamy to Mankind, if they shall find I deceive them.

In one thing I must desire to be forgiven, that I talk more sparingly of Home Affairs; As it would be Imprudence to

discover Secrets of State, so it would be dangerous to my Person, but in smaller Matters, and that are not of publick Consequence, I shall be very free ; and the Truth of my Conjectures will as much appear from these as the other. As for the most signal Events abroad in *France, Flanders, Italy and Spain*, I shall make no Scruple to Predict them in plain Terms : Some of them are of Importance, and I hope I shall seldom mistake the Day they will happen ; therefore I think good to inform the Reader, that I all along make use of the *Old Style* observ'd in *England*, which I desire he will compare with that of the News-Papers, at the time they relate the Actions I mention.

I must add one Word more ; I know it hath been the Opinion of several Learned, who think well enough of the true Art of Astrology. That the Stars do only *incline*, and not *force*, the Actions or Wills of Men : And therefore, however, I may proceed by right Rules, yet I cannot in Prudence so confidently assure the Events will follow exactly as I predict them.

I hope I have maturely consider'd this Objection, which in some Cases is of no little Weight : For Example ; A Man may by the Influence of an over-ruling Planet be dispos'd or inclined to Lust, Rage, or Avarice, and yet by the force of Reason overcome that bad Influence ; and this was the Case of *Socrates* ; But the great Events of the World usually depending upon Numbers of Men, it cannot be expected they should all unite to cross their Inclinations, from pursuing a general Design, wherein they unanimously agree. Besides, the Influence of the Stars reaches to many Actions and Events, which are not any way in the Power of Reason ; as Sickness, Death, and what we commonly call Accidents, with many more, needless to repeat.

But it is now time to proceed to my Predictions, which I have begun to calculate from the time that the *Sun* enters into *Aries*. And this I take to be properly the Beginning of the natural Year. I pursue them to the Time that he enters *Libra*, or somewhat more, which is the busy Period of the Year. The Remainder I have not yet adjust'd, upon Account of several Impediments needless here to mention, Besides, I must remind the Reader again, that this is but a Specimen of what I design in succeeding Years to treat more at large, if I may have Liberty and Encouragement.

My first Prediction is but a Trifle, yet I will mention it, to shew how ignorant these Sottish Pretenders to Astrology are in their own Concerns : It relates to *Partridge* the Almanack-maker ; I have consult'd the Star of his Nativity by my own Rules, and find he will infallibly dye upon the 29th of *March* next. about Eleven at Night, of a raging Fever ; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his Affairs in time.

The Month of *APRIL* will be observable for the Death of many great Persons. On the 4th, will dye the *Cardinal de Noailles Archbishop of Paris* : On the 11th, the young Prince of *Asturias*, Son to the Duke of *Anjou* : On the 14th, a great Peer of this Realm will dye at his Country House : On the 19th, and old *Layman* of great Fame for Learning : And on the 23th, an Eminent Goldsmith in *Lombard-Street*. I could mention others, both

at home and abroad, if I did not consider it is of very little use or Instruction to the Reader, or to the World.

As to Publick affairs : On the 7th of this Month, there will be an Insurrection in *Dauphiné*, occasion'd by the Oppressions of the People, which will not be quieted in some Months.

On the 15th, will be a violent Storm on the South-East Coast of *France*, which will destroy many of their Ships, and some in the very Harbour.

The 19th, will be famous for the Revolt of a whole Province or Kingdom, excepting one City, by which the Affairs of a certain Prince in the Alliance will take a better Face.

MAY, against common Conjectures, will be no very busy Month in *Europe*, but very signal for the Death of the *Dauphin*, which will happen on the 7th, after a short Sickness, and grievous Torments with the Strangury. He dies less lamented by the Court, than the Kingdom.

On the 9th, a *Mareschal* of *France* will break his Leg by a Fall from his Horse. I have not been able to discover whether he will then dye or not.

On the 11th, will begin a most important Siege, which the Eyes of all *Europe* will be upon : I cannot be more Particular, for in relating Affairs that so nearly concern the *Confederates*, and consequently this Kingdom, I am forc'd to confine my self, for several Reasons very obvious to the Reader.

On the 15th, News will arrive of a very Surprising Event, than which nothing could be more unexpected.

On the 19th, three noble Ladies of this Kingdom will against all Expectation, prove with Child, to the great Joy of their Husbands.

On the 23th, a famous Buffoon of the Play-house will dye of a ridiculous Death suitable to his Vocation.

JUNE. This Month will be distinguish'd at home by the utter dispersing of these ridiculous deluded Enthusiasts, commonly call'd the *Prophets*; occasion'd chiefly by seeing the Time come that many of their Prophecies should be fulfill'd, and then finding themselves deceiv'd by contrary Events. It is indeed to be admir'd how any Deceiver can be so weak to foretell Things near at hand, when a very few Months must of necessity discover the Imposture to all the World; in this Point I'm prudent than common Almanack-makers, who are so wise to wander in general, and talk dubiously, and leave to the Reader the Business of interpreting.

On the 1st of this Month, a *French* General will be kill'd by a random Shot of a Cannon Ball.

On the 6th, a Fire will break out in the Suburbs of *Paris*, which will destroy above a thousand Houses; and seems to be the preboding of what will happen, to the Surprise of all *Europe*, about the End of the following Month.

On the 10th, a great Battle will be fought, which will begin at Four of the Clock in the Afternoon, and last till 9 at Night with great Obstinacy, but no very decisive Event. I shall not name the Place, for the Reasons aforesaid; but the Commanders on each Left Wing will be kill'd. — I see Bonfires, and hear the Noise of Guns, for a Victory.

On the 14th, there will be a false Report of the *French King's* Death : On

On the 20th, the Cardinal *Portocarrero* will dye of a Dissentery, with great Suspicion; but the Report of his Intentions to revolt to King *Charles* will prove false.

July. The 6th of this Month, a certain General will, by a Glorious Action recover the Reputation he lost by former Misfortunes.

On the 12th, a Great Commander will dye a Prisoner in the Hands of his Enemies.

On the 14th, a shameful Discovery will be made, of a French Jesuit giving Poison to a great Foreign General, and when he is put to the Torture, will make wonderful Discoveries.

In short, this will prove a Month of great Action, if I might have Liberty to relate the Particulars.

At home, the Death of an old famous Senator will happen on the 15th, at his County-House, worn out with Age and Diseases.

But that which will make this Month memorable to all Posterity, is the Death of the French King *Lewis XIV.* after a Weeks Sicknes at *Marli*, which will happen on the 29th about six a Clok in the Evening. It seems to be an effect of the Gout in his Stomach, follow'd by a Flux. And in three Days after *Monsieur Chamillard* will follow his Master, dying suddenly of an Apoplexy.

In this Month likewise an Ambassador will dye in London, but I cannot assign the day.

August. The Affairs of France will seem to suffer no change for a while under the Duke of Burgundy's Administration; but but the Genius that animated the whole Machine being gone, will be the Cause of mighty turns and Revolutions in the following year. The new King makes yet little Change either in the Army or Ministry, but the Libels against his Father that fly about his very Court, give him uneasiness.

I see an Express in mighty haste, with Joy and Wonder in his Looks, arriving by break of day on the 26th of this Month, having travell'd in 3 days a prodigious Journey by Land and Sea. In the Evening I hear Bells and Guns, and see the Blazing of a thousand Bonfires.

A young Admiral of noble Birth does likewise this Month gain immortal Honour by a great Atchievment.

The Affairs of Poland are this Month entirely settled: *Augustus* relinques his pretensions, which he had again taken up for some time: *Stanislaus* is peaceably posses'd of the Throne: And the King of Sweden declares for the Emperor.

I cannot omit one particular Accident here at home, and near the end of this Month much Mischief will be done at *Bartholomew Fair* by the fall of a Booth.

September. This Month begins with a very surprising Fit of Frosty weather, which will last near 12 days.

The Pope having long languish'd last Month the Swellings in his Legs breaking, and the Flesh mortifying, will die on the 11th Instant, and in Three Weeks time after a mighty Contest, be succeeded by a Cardinal of the Imperial Faction but Native of *Tuscany*, who is now about 61 Years old.

The *French Army* Acts now wholly on the defensive, strongly fortified in their Trenches; and the young *French King* sends Overtures for a Treaty of Peace, by the Duke of *Mantua*; which, because it is a matter of State that concerns us here at home, I shall speak no further of it.

I shall add but one Prediction more, and that in mystical Terms, which shall be included in a Verse out of *Virgil*.

*Alter erit jam Tethys, & altera quæ vebat Argo
Dilectas Heroas.*

Upon the 25th day of this Month, the fulfilling of this Prediction will be manifest to every body.

This is the furthest I have proceeded in my Calculations for the present year. I do not pretend that these are all the great Events which will happen in this Period, but that those that I have set down will infallibly come to pass. It will perhaps still be objected, why I have not spoke more particularly of Affairs at home, or of the Success of our Armies abroad, which I might add could very largely have done; but those in Power have wisely discourag'd Men from meddling in publick Concerns, and I was resolv'd by no means to give the least Offence. This I will venture to say, That it will be a Glorious Campaign for the *Allies*, wherein the *English Forces* both by Sea and Land, will have their full share of Honour; That Her Majesty Queen *ANNE* will continue in Health and Prosperity; And that no ill Accident will arrive to any in the Chief Ministry.

As to the particular Events I have mention'd, the Readers may judge by the fulfilling of them, whether I am of the Level with common *Astrologers*; who with an old poultry Cant, and a few Pot-hooks for Planets to amuse the Vulgar, have,

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in my Opinion, too long been suffer'd to abuse the World : But an honest Physician ought not to be despis'd, because there are such things as Mountebanks. I hope I have some share of Reputation, which I would not willingly forfeit for a Frolick of Humour ; And I believe no Gentleman, who reads this Paper, will look upon it to be of the same Last or Mould with the common Scribes that are every Day hawk'd about. My Fortune has plac'd me above the little regards of Scribbling for a few pence, which I neither value nor want : Therefore let not wise Men too hastily Condemn this Essay, intended for a good design to cultivate and improve an Ancient Art long in Disgrace by having fallen into mean and unskilful Hands. A little time will determine, whether I have deceived others, or my self ; and I think it no very unreasonable Request, that Men would please to suspend their Judgments till then. I was once of the Opinion with those who despise all Predictions from the Stars, till in the year 1686, a Man of Quality shew'd me written his *Album*, That the most Learned Astronomer Captain H. assur'd him, he would never believe any thing of the Stars Influence, if there were not a great Revolution in *England* in the year 1688. Since that time I began to have other Thoughts, and after eighteen years diligent Study and Application, I think I have no Reason to repent of my Pains. I shall detain the Reader no longer than to let him know that the Account I design to give of next years Events shall take in the Principal Affairs that happen in *Europe* ; and if I be denied the Liberty of offering it to my own Country, I shall appeal to the Learn'd World, by publishing it in *Latin*, and giving Order to have it Printed in *Holland*.

F I N I S.

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